



Virginia Department of Transportation

MEMORANDUM

GENERAL SUBJECT: Materials Certification Schools	JOINT MEMORANDUM NUMBER: MD 250-05 CD-2005-06
SPECIFIC SUBJECT: Nuclear Safety School, Hydraulic Cement Concrete Field Certification & Web-Based Recertification	DATE: April 29, 2005
DIRECTED TO: District Administrators	SIGNATURE: <i>Signature on original copy of memorandum</i> Andrew Mergenmeier, PE State Materials Engineer <i>Signature on original copy of memorandum</i> W. Byron Coburn, JR., PE Scheduling and Contract Engineer

The VDOT Materials Certification Schools will be instituting some policy changes that will have statewide impact. These changes are based on identified business needs and ultimately will benefit the agency as a whole. The policy changes were discussed and agreed upon by the Materials Division and the Scheduling and Contract Division.

The summarized changes include:

- Using private sector Nuclear Safety Schools and eliminating the VDOT taught school
- VDOT personnel required to pass American Concrete Institute Field Level I Certification
- Recertification schools moving to a web-based format with on-line exam

The first change is that VDOT will no longer offer the Materials Certification School in Nuclear Safety and Hazardous Materials Transportation. This certification is required of personnel who transport and operate the nuclear density gauges used on the projects to check density of compacted soil, aggregate and asphalt. Currently the enrollment in the classes is approximately 75% non-VDOT people. The certification course content is dictated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and is offered by numerous vendors in the private sector. VDOT personnel who transport or operate a nuclear density gauge will still need to maintain this certification but it will now need to be obtained through a private vendor.

We believe that the private sector will offer greater flexibility in scheduling this certification as they offer more schools throughout the year and some will offer on-demand classes. By no longer offering this school VDOT will better utilize our resources, saving money spent on renting training venues and reducing man-hours spent on developing and providing this training. This change will take effect on July 1, 2005.

The Materials Division, through the District Radiation Safety Officers (RSO), will still manage the use of VDOT nuclear gauges operated on the NRC license issued to VDOT. Possession of a NRC approved Nuclear Safety Certification will be required prior to issuance of a thermoluminescent dosimetry (TLD) badge to VDOT employees.

The second policy change affects the Hydraulic Cement Concrete (HCC) Field Certification program. Presently all candidates for the HCC Field Certification must complete a hands on proficiency test in addition to passing the written examination. Non-VDOT candidates meet this requirement by obtaining the American Concrete Institute (ACI) Field Level I Certification while VDOT candidates complete an in-house ACI like proficiency test. The new policy will require VDOT personnel to obtain the ACI Field Level I Certification; the in-house proficiency test will no longer be offered.

The ACI program is highly regarded and a nationally recognized program. By requiring this certification of VDOT personnel we eliminate duplication of efforts, eliminate any perceived double standard between VDOT and private sector technicians, ensure a consistent level of training and evaluation for all and raise the bar for our VDOT employees. This training is offered through the Virginia Ready-Mixed Concrete Association throughout the year at numerous sites around the state. This change will take effect July 1, 2005.

The final policy change is a major modification of our recertification program from a classroom-based program to a web-based program with an on-line exam. Starting in 2007 all candidates for recertification will be required to complete a hands on proficiency test. By the 2007 school year, we will have the recertification schools in place as a web-based on-line program. Personnel with a certification expiring on June 30, 2007 will have from July 1, 2006 until June 30, 2007 to complete the on-line recertification program and any required proficiency test. Completion of both of these items will result in recertification in the relevant subject area.

We believe that the move to a web-based approach will enhance our recertification program in the following areas:

- on-line exam (current recertification program has no written exam)
- flexibility of scheduling on-line recertification will be 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at a location convenient to the student

This will result in more efficient use of personnel and financial resources. In addition, the requirement of hands on proficiency testing as part of the recertification program is intended to raise the competency level of our technicians as well as meeting FHWA guidelines concerning the qualifications of personnel sampling and testing materials on the projects.

There will be no recertification schools in the 2006 school year. Going from a four-year to a five-year certification period in 2002 brought this about. A few technicians have gotten out of sync due to extensions and have certifications that will expire in 2006. These technicians will be granted a one-year extension of their certifications to June 30, 2007.

The re-certification requirements for Nuclear Safety and Hazardous Materials Transportation, however, remain the same, requiring recertification every 3 years as this is a Federal requirement. Certified technicians will have to use the private vendor for recertification.

Ultimately our goal is to raise the value and integrity of the Materials Certification Schools while realizing the increased demands being placed on all of our resources. If you have any questions concerning these changes please contact Duane Sayre, Materials Division Training Programs Manager at (804) 328-3150 or rd.sayre@vdot.virginia.gov.

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